Chitradurga; which will reduce the distance between Tumkur and Davanagere by about 60 kms (road); and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY C RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes, Sir. However, the reduction in distance through the suggested line will be about 25 km.

(b) There is no proposal to undertake construction of the line at present due to constraints of resources.

Airstrip in Darjeeling

5412. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to construct an airstrip in Darjeeling for the benefit of the foreign visitors; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA); (a) and (b). The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council has suggested the construction of an airstrip at Tiger Hill in Darjeeling. The site was surveyed by the National Airports Authority and it was found that it might be feasible to construct an airstrip of 6500 ft.X 150 ft. suitable for operation of Avro type aircraft at a cost of about Rs. 25 crores. A Committee constituted by the Ministry of Environment & Forests has,however, not found the site to be suitable from the environmental stand point. The construction of the airstrip depends, inter-alia, on clearance being given by the Ministry of Environment & Forests and adequate funds being made available to the National Airports Authority.

[*Translation*]

Training to employees working on Farakka-Lalmatia railway line

5413. SHRI SIMON MARANDI: will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased state:

(a) the number of employees on Farakka-Lalmatia railway line to whom training has been imparted till date to make them skilled during the last three years; year-wise; and

(b) the number of employees working for the last three years who have not been imparted the said training so far and the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN)(a) and (b). Farakka-Lalmatia Raiiway line is owned is owned and maintained by the National Thermal Power Corporation, as a private siding.

[*English*]

Air Taxi scheme

5414. DR. G.L. KANAUJIA:
SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:
SHRI MAHESH KANODIA:
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Air Taxis a near flop" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated August 16, 1991;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c)the action taken by the Government to make alternative arrangements to air link all district in the country?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA) (a) : Yes, Sir.